

## **My Recipe for First-Fruits Bread**

(Exodus 23:19, Exodus 34:22, Leviticus 23:17)

(Based on a modern recipe for yeast bread scaled to use the amount of flour listed in Lev. 23:17, assuming 4 US Cups is 1 omer of flour)

### **Recipe for one loaf of bread:**

3 tsp yeast

1 C warm water

2.5-3 C water

1 TBS salt

2/3 C olive oil (try ½ C, also)

8 C sifted wheat flour More flour than the 8 C will be needed for kneading, up to 4-5 C more, so have extra on hand already prepared.

### **Method:**

Soften yeast in 1 C warm water. Let sit until bubbly. While you are waiting, put flour and salt in bowl and mix well. Add the oil, and mix until there are pea-sized globs uniformly distributed in the flour. Add the yeast, and rinse the yeast bowl with another cup of warm water. Add the rinsing to the flour. Add 1/2C more warm water, and stir to mix. If it is still too crumbly to make a moderately-stiff loaf, then add more water in 1/4C increments, or so, until you can start to knead the dough. If you make it too thin and sticky, then add more flour until the dough is suitable for kneading.

Turn out onto either a well-floured, or well-oiled surface for kneading. Knead by folding and turning, adding more oil, or more flour on your kneading surface, until you get a smooth, satiny dough. This could be from 15 minutes to 2 hours, depending on the gluten content of your dough, and whether it was sifted or includes the bran.

You are finished when a small piece of dough can be stretched out thin, like pizza dough, without breaking. This is also called the window-pane test, if you can stretch it enough to see some light come through the dough when holding it up to a light source. If you can't get it to this point after two hours of kneading, then go ahead and proceed with the rising and baking.

Put dough in a well-greased and floured pan. If you don't have a large loaf pan for French bread, then use a 3-quart square casserole dish or 10-12-inch round pizza pan. Cover and let rise in a warm place until doubled, or about 45-60 minutes. Bake at 325 degrees F for about 45 minutes, or until top is well-browned and hollow-sounding when tapped. If necessary, turn the oven temperature down the last 15 minutes, to ensure the middle of the bread is baked, without burning the top of the loaf.

Take out and cool on cooling racks.

Repeat for second loaf of bread, or, if you have room in your oven to make the second loaf at the same time, then just use the recipe for the larger amount below.

## Recipe for the two loaves of bread:

6 tsp yeast  
1 C water

hot water, 5-6 C  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  C salt  
1  $\frac{1}{3}$  C olive oil (Try 1 C also)  
16 C flour, plus more for kneading. Plan an extra 4-6 C more.

Soften yeast in 1 C of warm water. Let sit until bubbly. Combine flour, salt, and oil. Put in the softened yeast into the flour, and add 3 more C of water. Stir to mix. Add more water, or flour, until it makes a moderately stiff dough. Turn out on a well-oiled or well-floured table, if it is sticky. Knead until smooth and satiny, about 15 minutes, for well-sifted flour, or up to 2 hours for unsifted flour. It is finished being kneaded when a small ball of dough can be stretched thin enough to see some light through it, like pizza dough. This is called the window-pane test. If you can't get it to this stage after 2 hours of hand kneading, then just start letting it rise anyway. I have the best raised bread if I let it rise only once, so at this point I shape into two round loaves and put in 2- 3- quart greased and floured casserole dishes, or on 2 greased and floured 12" cookie sheets or pizza pans that have a small rim on them. Let rise until double, about an hour. Bake in a 325 degree F oven until golden brown, and top sounds hollow when you tap on it., about 45 minutes. If necessary, turn down the heat after about a half hour, to make sure the inside of the loaf gets done before the outside gets too dark.

Note: This bread was quite crumbly, and did not slice well until it was at least 1 day old. I may not have kneaded it enough, or else there is too much oil in with this recipe. Since the oil added was based on the unleavened bread recipe for the amount of oil, you may experiment around with adding less oil.

Rochelle A. Houser

**1. Sifting and Measuring:** Sift and Measure 8 C per loaf of bread. Make sure you have about 22C total, for kneading, and flouring pans.



- 2. Measure out yeast and water:** 3 teaspoons yeast for 1 loaf, Softened in 1 C warm water. Let it get foamy before adding to flour mixture. Do step 3 while waiting. (Showing 1 loaf batch).
- 3. Measure out flour, salt, and oil:** Measure out 8 C flour,  $\frac{3}{4}$  C oil, and 1 tablespoon salt.



4. Mix flour, salt and oil until small dough balls appear uniformly throughout.
5. Add yeast to flour mixture.



6. Add 2 C water, or until you get a moderately stiff dough. Add more water, or flour to get to where you can knead the dough.



7. Knead on well-oiled, or lightly floured surface until sponge is smooth and satiny, and passes the “window pane test”. This is what the “window pane test” looks like



The window-pane test results will depend on how much gluten is in your flour, and how long you knead it. These are all acceptable results to stop kneading. Left bottom one is with very finely sifted whole wheat flour, until it was almost white, higher gluten flour. The other two are with unsifted, stone-ground wheat flour with a low gluten content.

**8. Cover and let rest 5-10 minutes. Grease and flour your pan while you are waiting.**

**9. Transfer dough to pan. Cover, and let rise until double. (About 45 minutes). Wash dishes and clean off the table while you are waiting for it to rise. Preheat oven to 325 degrees F.**



**10. Bake at 325 degrees F for about 45 minutes, or until golden brown, and loaves are hollow-sounding when tapped.**

**11. Remove from oven, and cool on cooling racks. Enjoy!**

